

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting Forest Service Reports

January 7, 1993

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am pleased to transmit to the Congress three study reports prepared by the Department of Agriculture's Forest Service. I support the recommendations provided by the Secretary of Agriculture in each of these reports. The three reports are:

(1) Wild and Scenic River study and draft legislation to designate 19.4 miles of the Red River in Kentucky as part of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

(2) Wild and Scenic River study and recommendation for designation of 133 miles of the Greenbrier River in West Virginia as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System under State administration and jurisdiction.

(3) Wilderness study report for the Pyramid Peak Wilderness Study Area in California with a recommendation that this area be released from further consideration for wilderness designation. Current management will emphasize nonmotorized, dispersed recreation, essentially maintaining the area in an undeveloped state.

Red River:

I am particularly pleased to transmit legislation to designate 19.4 miles of the Red River as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. Designation of the Red River received strong public support during the study, and this would be the first Wild and Scenic River designated in the State of Kentucky.

The natural, scenic, and recreational qualities of the Red River are unique and irreplaceable resources. The majority of the river corridor is within the Red River National Geologic Area, a "geological wonderland" of sedimentary rock formations unique to that area and the United States. The Red River also flows through the scenic Clifty Wilderness for a distance of 4.5 miles.

Recreational use of the Red River and adjacent lands totaled over 200,000 visitor days in 1990. This figure is expected to increase in the future, as approximately 94 million people presently live within a day's

drive of the Red River.

Greenbrier River:

The Greenbrier River in West Virginia was studied by the Forest Service, in cooperation with the State of West Virginia and local communities. The Secretary recommends that 133 miles of the river be added to the System through local and State initiatives.

Outstanding outdoor recreation values are associated with the Greenbrier River and its corridor lands. Recreation activities include boating, whitewater canoeing, primitive and developed site camping, hiking, fishing, hunting, spelunking, and cross-country skiing. In recognition of these values, the State of West Virginia has already included the main stem of the Greenbrier River below Knapps Creek under the West Virginia Natural Streams Preservation Act. This Act maintains the free-flowing character of that portion of the river. This indicates the considerable support by local residents and interest groups for protection of the values of the river corridor, provided such protection is under local management control.

Under the approach recommended by the Secretary, the decision to seek designation as a Wild and Scenic River would be the prerogative of the State. First, the West Virginia State legislature would include the remainder of the upper Greenbrier River under the West Virginia Natural Streams Preservation Act. Second, a group would be formed locally to develop a proposed management plan for the river, which would be reviewed and approved by the Governor. The Governor would then recommend to the Secretary of the Interior that the Greenbrier River be federally designated under section 2(a)(ii) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. If the Secretary approves, the river would be so designated, and the State would have the primary responsibility for administration of the river according to the

Jan. 7 / Administration of George Bush, 1993

management plan. I am hopeful that the State of West Virginia will assume this responsibility.

This emphasis on local control is recommended over Federal administration of the river because the State of West Virginia already manages a significant portion of the river corridor lands and the recreational activities associated with the river. In addition, the corridor includes a significant acreage of private lands that can be most effectively managed through local land-use controls and landowner participation. Landowners are particularly concerned that Federal administration would impact management and use of their private lands. I believe that the Secretary's recommendation provides for protection of the river's natural values, while maintaining control at the local level.

Pyramid Peak:

The third report addresses the Pyramid Peak Planning Area in the San Bernardino National Forest in California. The Congress directed that this area be studied as a potential Wilderness Area in the California Wilderness Act of 1984. The suitability of this area for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System was analyzed in the San Bernardino National Forest Plan, which was implemented in 1989. The Forest Plan decision was to allocate this area to a management prescription that emphasizes nonmotorized, dispersed recreation management, essentially maintaining the

area in an undeveloped state. This management direction has advantages over wilderness designation because it provides for development of habitat improvement projects, both for the bighorn sheep and other wildlife species in the area. Nonwilderness management will also allow treatment of vegetation to enhance resources such as water yield and to reduce fuel accumulations. I support the Secretary's recommendation and request that the Pyramid Peak Planning Area be released from further consideration for wilderness designation.

Transmittal of these recommendations to the Congress fulfills the requirements of section 5(b) of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act and section 102 of the California Wilderness Act of 1984. I urge the Congress to pass legislation designating the Red River as a component of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. I also request that the Congress take no action at this time to designate the Greenbrier River as a Wild and Scenic River or include the Pyramid Peak Planning Area in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Sincerely,

GEORGE BUSH

Note: Identical letters were sent to Thomas S. Foley, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Dan Quayle, President of the Senate.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting Proposed Legislation on Colorado Public Lands Wilderness Designation

January 7, 1993

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am pleased to submit for congressional consideration and passage the "Colorado Public Lands Wilderness Act".

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), (43 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*), directs the Secretary of the Interior to review the wilderness potential of the public lands.

The review of the areas identified in Col-

orado began immediately after the enactment of FLPMA and has now been completed. Approximately 771,822 acres of public lands in 54 areas in Colorado met the minimum wilderness criteria and were designated as wilderness study areas (WSAs). These WSAs were studied and analyzed during the review process and the results documented in eight environmental impact statements and five instant study